

Art & Eros Magazine



Volume Fourteen: Spring 2024

Art & Eros Magazine: Volume Fourteen

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Cover picture: Melany and her alter ego ...

If you have a submission for the **Art & Eros Magazine** feel free to contact the magazine. The editor can be contacted at

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By the time we had left Chicago I had made my decision ... this summer I was going to be feral. I would lose my virginity as a way of getting back at my mother. In retrospect this was a stupid decision which thankfully played ... but not fully. By the end of the summer I would know a bit more about boys ... yet still wore my halo.

Charlotte

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Prologue

Obelisk Press of Vancouver is delighted to publish the Spring 2024 edition of *Art & Eros* Magazine which serves to feature the work of aspiring artists.

In this edition we have some lovely pictorials of Melany, a wonderful story from Charlotte, a revelation by Yumi, Yuki explaining the Kynodesme, as well as a fine collection of prose and poetry by other authors. Thanks!

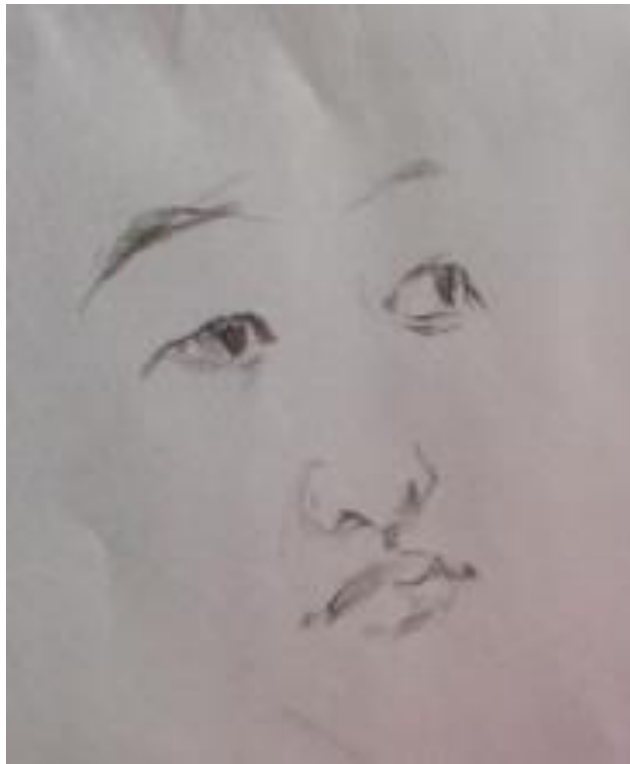
Art & Eros Magazine welcomes submissions on a quarterly basis. Please feel free to submit your short stories, prose, poetry and artwork to

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There is no fee to submit. There is no writer's fee provided by the journal for those who submit. The publishing rights remain with the writer.

New Art

Images of Beauty and of Love by Cindy Xu







The Art of the Selfie by Karen S

These are some selfies of me and my friends. I asked them to send me selfies.



















As you can see, selfies can be both personal and beautiful.

Not all Cameras are the Same in their Color Renditions

Here are two pictures of the same piece of art taken on two different smartphone cameras. The artwork is a small painting titled *The Happy Bumble Bee*.

Here is a picture of this artwork taken with a low cost, basic camera:



The colours appear subdued and earthy. The actual colours are much brighter. For instance, the wings of the bumble bee are made of gold leaf.

This is a picture taken off a low cost, basic camera:



This second picture was taken before the gold leaf was added. This picture is closer to the actual colours of the artwork, which are bright and lively.

It seems obvious that not all smart phones are of similar quality.

The Many Poses of Melany







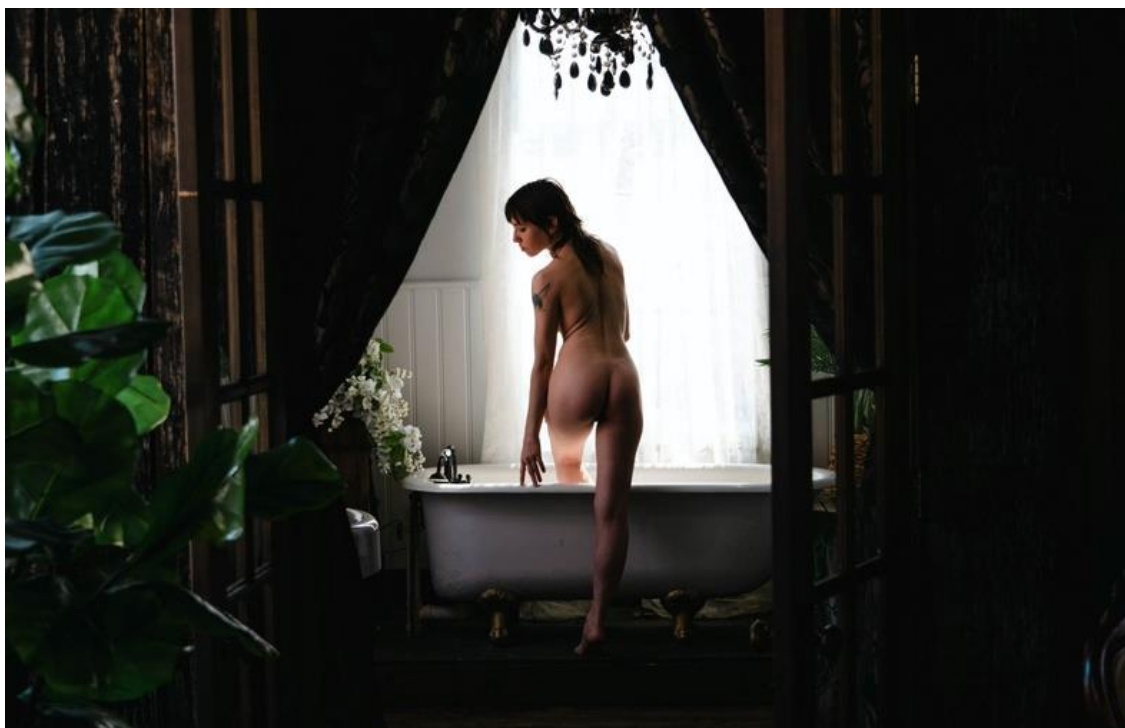












The cover pictorial is also of Melany ...

New Prose

To be an Asian woman ... by Rachel Phan

Full title: *To be an Asian woman is to be metaphorically cut up and reduced to your body parts.*

I learned this for the first time in the seventh grade when a boy in my class told me, completely out of the blue, that I had “good dick-sucking lips.” I was 12 years old then and unaccustomed to such attention from anyone, let alone someone of the opposite sex. I was thrilled by the remark.

Before hormones started ravaging my body, I had lived a life of attempted invisibility. As one of only two non-white kids in my grade — and the only Chinese Canadian — I found freedom in not being noticed. Even as a young child, I recognized that being so different from everyone else made me too remarkable. It was easier to try to fade into the walls and to not be seen. After all, to be seen would be to invite commentary about my difference.

But in that moment, as I was complimented on my lips and the specific act I could do with them, I felt the intoxicating high of being noticed and feeling beautiful for the very first time. It registered with me, then, that my body — my sexuality — could be my superpower.

As the years went by, and my boobs grew perky and my hips began to curve, the comments about my body parts only intensified.

There was the time when a boy accosted me on the beach to ask me what color and shape my nipples were before asking if I wanted to touch his penis.

Or the time when a friend came home for Christmas after his first semester at university and told me he had slept with his “first Asian” and that the rumors about the tightness of our vaginas was true. “I bet yours is just like that,” he said, adding a new twist to the racist stereotype that “all Asians look alike.”

Such unsolicited remarks about my Asian body weren’t always sexual in nature, either. There was the time when some girls crowded around me in the changing room after an elementary school gym class to touch my hair. “Wow, it’s so thick,” someone said. “Like a horse’s.” I smiled and let them pet me, and as they ran their fingers through my long hair, I winced only slightly when someone tugged too hard.

I learned to repress how ashamed and small these comments made me feel. “What’s your problem, Rachel?” I would think to myself. “This is what it feels like to be wanted.” In my mind, I had been given the choice of continuing to hide and be invisible, or to be wanted and desired — and I chose the latter, every time.

After years of fetishization and objectification, I had at some point internalized the belief that this was what it meant to be an Asian woman. It meant being a source of desire and derision all at once. While others may have stopped believing the lie we hear as young children — “he hurts you because

he likes you” — I let myself see racial abuse as the price to pay to be granted attention and affection, especially from white men.

I eventually became so full of self-loathing — and my self-worth became so devastatingly low — that I convinced myself it was enough to be wanted solely because of my race and my appearance. Who I was as a person didn’t really matter. In all honesty, I don’t think I even knew who I was as a person at the time. I had become a blank slate, to be whatever the people around me wanted me to be.

That meant I laughed it off when that boy approached me on the beach to inquire about my nipples. It meant I ended up having a secret relationship with the friend who thought all Asian vaginas felt the same.

And later, it meant I would stay in a six-year relationship with a man who made me feel ashamed about my ethnicity at every turn. This relationship was marked by his refusals to eat Chinese food unless it was “westernized,” his silence whenever his father would refer to Asian people as “panfaces,” and his insistence that I learn how to “take a joke.”

I eventually ended things with him after one final fight, when he told me how uncomfortable it made him whenever I brought up race. And because he and his friends found racist jokes to be hilarious, I had started to bring up race a lot.

I know stories like mine aren't particularly new or shocking, especially to my Asian American sisters. The sexualized racism and microaggressions I've faced in my life are no different from what too many of them endure every single day. In fact, the painful, dehumanizing belief that I learned at 12 years old — that we as people matter less than our body parts — is one that women of the Asian diaspora learn directly and indirectly, all the time.

We learn it from the harmful stereotypes of Asian in popular culture where we're depicted — if we're shown at all — as either meek and submissive “China Dolls” or hypersexual and deceitful “Dragon Ladies.” Such depictions are the result of centuries of western imperialism and violent conquests, all of which have contributed to a present-day reality in which men feel entitled to Asian women's bodies.

Some people, like my ex-boyfriend, might think this is “not a big deal” and even argue that being fetishized by the white patriarchal gaze is an empowering privilege. I shamefully used to believe this lie, too.

But I know better now. These seemingly “harmless” comments and stereotypes are acts of violence, full stop. The whole point is to dehumanize us so it's easier to abuse, exploit and degrade Asian women and our bodies. Our dehumanization makes it easier to see us as “temptation” to gun down and “eliminate.” It makes us more vulnerable to domestic abuse and random violence on the street, too.

A few weeks after the breakup with my ex, I found myself newly single, afraid to be alone for the first time in my adult life, and on a first date with a stranger. It was on that night that I finally acknowledged how destructive my thoughts and actions had become. It was, after all, the night when my date leaned across the table and told me, “I bet your pussy tastes just like General Tso’s chicken,” and I still went home with him.

There’s no ruder wake-up call than sleeping with a man who’s compared your genitalia to a deep-fried chicken dish. I knew then that I desperately needed to get my house in order.

I found myself a Chinese Canadian psychotherapist and committed to being single for as long as I needed to be able to form healthy relationships with people who weren’t racist. I ended friendships with people who thought racist jokes were not only acceptable but actually funny. I started to reconnect with my culture in meaningful ways, one dish and conversation with my parents at a time.

The hardest and most life-changing work, though, was the internal work. It took years of therapy and many painful reflections about the hateful, subconscious beliefs I had internalized about myself and my Asian body to finally end my destructive patterns.

Of course, I still struggle with less-than-healthy decision-making and I don’t always feel comfortable in my Asian skin, but I am unwaveringly proud to be a Chinese Canadian woman. And, by the grace of God, I’m in a happy

marriage with a wonderful man who sees me as a whole, complex human being and who feels just as strongly about dismantling white supremacy as I do.

Repeat after me: Asian women are human beings. We do not exist to fulfill your sexual desires or whatever entitlement to sex you believe you have. We have the right to live without being bombarded with this stigma.

And if you approach me to make an unsolicited comment about my body and expect me to be the docile *China Doll* who will do whatever you want, I will kindly and happily tell you to fuck off. My body has never — and will never — belong to you.

When I Needed Rent Money by Julie Aymes



[**Denver**] When I was barely eighteen I decided to move out of my parent's home. I had just graduated from high school. My father and I didn't get along. He had served in the Marine Corps in the Pacific during World War Two and my mother told me that what he experienced while fighting on Iwo Jima had changed him. My parents had dated in high school and were married just before he was shipped out to the Pacific in 1944.

I was born fifteen years later in 1959. In 1977 was when I left home. It was near the end of the turbulent seventies. I admit I was free spirited but I wasn't a hippie. Nonetheless, my father thought me a hippie. If he had his way he would have locked me away until my wedding night ... for reasons only a father can deem for their 'china doll' daughters.

My mother told me they had been sharing a bed since they were both in high school. One day when I boldly told my father this ... he blew his stack. When I said this to him I was still a virgin but he didn't believe me! Understand this, my father was never violent to me, either physically or verbally, but he was unfeeling when it came to his choice of words and his intent. He wouldn't let me go to school dances nor spend weekends away with my girlfriends. That was when I decided it was time to live on my own.

My mother helped me find my first apartment, in a vintage, fully furnished 1950's building. She even gave me my first month rent, but the day I left she said I would have to fend for myself from that day onward. '*If it didn't work out I was welcome to return home.*' The first night by myself in my apartment I did not sleep a wink! I would make it work ...

In deciding to leave I knew I could not go to college and live by myself in my own apartment at the same time, so I got myself two part time jobs, one as a cashier at a supermarket, and the other as an apprentice for a photographer who specialized on wedding photographs.

The first month's rent was paid, but when the second month's rent came due I had yet to receive my first pay cheques for either of my two part time jobs. Perhaps if I had been a bit wiser I would have worked a few months before moving out so that I had some money in the bank.

The morning the landlord came to knock on my door for the second month's rent I felt very anxious. To pay the rent I borrowed against my credit card, all but maxing it out. Later that day I gave her my rent check.

The apartment was three stories tall with six apartment. She lived in one of the six apartments, leaving the other five to cover the \$ 2,000 monthly mortgage for the building. In 1977 a rent of \$ 400 a month was a bit high. I regret I did not shop around before I signed a year-long lease for my apartment. The following year I found a place just as good at \$ 250 a month.

That afternoon I went to the photographer's and asked for my pay cheque. He claimed we had a misunderstanding. Working as his apprentice was an unpaid position! We were in the middle of a wedding shoot when he told me this. I had worked for him for five weeks and had helped him with eight wedding shoots. His fee was \$ 100 per shoot. I could have walked then and there but I didn't. A bride and groom were in the studio. They witnessed the photographer con me. They were so appreciative I did not ditch their shoot they gave me \$ 50 as a gratuity ... when the photographer wasn't looking mind you ... then told him they wanted to find another photographer instead of him and walked out of the studio. He blew his stack and accused me of sabotaging his customer. I told him where to put his sabot ...

The following morning when I arrived at the grocery store I found that we were locked out due to a labor dispute. The dispute would last two months. None of us would receive our paychecks until after we returned to work!

I was frantic and walked back to my apartment to save the bus fare. Me walking home turned out to be a blessing. I bumped into one of my high school friends who was going to art school. To cheer me up she invited me to spend the afternoon with her. I had nothing else to do so I did.

She had two classes that day, one on color theory that went from 1 to 2:30, then a life drawing class from 3 to 4:30. The color theory class was bizarre. It involved an entire class about paintings by the surrealist Paul Klee. We grabbed a quick coffee at the coffee shop across from the art school at 2:45 then dashed back for her life drawing class. She was excited because they were supposed to have a nude male to draw that afternoon.

By 3:15 he had not shown up. The instructor was about to cancel the class when she noticed me and asked me if I was a student? I said no ... then for some reason she asked me if I was a model ... and for some reason I said yes.

I sat for the art students that afternoon and got paid \$ 25 for just sitting there! The art school ended up hiring me as an artist model to sit four times a week, earning me more money as an artist model than I made as a grocery clerk.

It was two years before I stopped by my parent's place for a Christmas visit. My mother asked about my rent ... I told her she did not have to worry and told her how I earned my rent money. She wisely did not tell my father. The picture is a Polaroid from 1978 of me sitting for some life drawing students.

Oh My: Part One ... by Charlotte

I have to admit I was angry at my mother. On the eve of my seventeenth birthday she told me to pack a travel bag and off we went across country, from New York City to Stanford in California. It was the start of the summer and I thought we were just taking a short holiday together. When we were cruising at 30,000 feet on our way from New York to Chicago she broke the news that she was separating from my father. She had caught him having an affair with one of his grad students ...

When my mother broke the news I could not stop crying. Things had been tense at home over the past several months. I knew something was going on but neither my father nor mother would tell me what. It seems his grad student girlfriend had gotten pregnant ... (my mother used another word ... but oars are for boats aren't they?). That sounded familiar. That's how my parents met and also how I came along.

My mother was my father's second wife. He was a married man when she was his graduate student and had gotten pregnant. He had wanted my mother to have an abortion but she refused ... *Thank God* ... otherwise I would not be here to tell my story. Now it looked like he would have a third wife, and another baby. I had an older half-sister from his first marriage. Now we would both have a new sibling.

As I looked out the window I wondered about what would come next? When we got to Chicago I wanted to turn back home but my mother said that we

would be moving to a new university in California. Both my parents are university professors. I now understood why my mother asked me for my cellphone when we got on the plane. I pleaded for it but all she said was “I promise I will give it back to you when we get to Stanford.” When we got on the plane she didn’t even tell me we were off to California. I thought we were getting off in Chicago.

If I had my cellphone I would have called my boyfriend then and there and he would have flown to Chicago to get me and bring me back to his place in New York. At least I would have been in a familiar city.

I was twice as angry with my mother because my boyfriend and I had made plans for us to go upstate to his family’s cottage and spend the summer together there. And quite frankly I wanted to share a bed with him, something my mother forbade me to do. “What if you got pregnant?” Sure, fancy that she would say that, I was sixteen and she was thirty-five. I heard that the first time she had sex was with her prof (my father) as a way of trying to convince him to give her a higher final grade!

It is kind’a crazy because she knew that I knew the whole story ... but I was not allowed to say anything! My mother had been over protective of me. My parents sent me to an all-girl Catholic school. I knew for a fact that I was the only girl in my grade who was still a virgin. I had not even touched a boy or let a boy touch me. I had never even seen a naked boy nor let see me naked. The fact that my boyfriend was back in New York and I was going to live in

California made matters twice as bad. He was Catholic and good boy. That was just too much pressure on me.

By the time we had left Chicago I had made my decision ... this summer I was going to be feral. I would lose my virginity as a way of getting back at my mother. In retrospect this was a stupid decision which thankfully played ... but not fully. By the end of the summer I would know a bit more about boys ... yet still wore my halo.

At Stanford my mother was going to be interviewed for three jobs, one of which she would be asked to take. The three interviews were more to let her decide which position she wanted. The university had already made her a job offer. For the week they had arranged to put us up at the guesthouse at the Stanford Linear Accelerator.

When we arrived at the SLAC guesthouse, as we were checking in my mother said she would be going out to dinner tonight with your prof friends and asked if I wanted to come. I said an emphatic no. I then asked my mother for my cellphone. When she gave it back to me the battery had been entirely drained and we didn't have a charger. Neither did the guest house!

"What am I going to all night?" I asked her.

"You can watch television," she answered.

The manager frowned. "There is no television in our rooms Ma'am."

Now I was hooped!

Out of the corner of my eye I saw a man sitting reading a newspaper and he looked at me and seemed to understand my plight. Not just my little one, mind you, but the bigger plight. He reached into his jacket pocket and dangled a cellphone charger. He put his finger to his lips and mocked ... shh! Then he folded the newspaper, placed the charger within the fold, got up and walked over to stand next to me.

“Here miss, you can borrow my weekend New York Times. When you are finished with it just place it outside room 12.” Then he walked away. My angst seemed to dissolve in half. I was still miffed I was in California, but now at least I will be able to text my boyfriend. I also sensed I had a new friend. We were given room 14.

My mother turned to me and said “there dear, now you have something to do this evening. Are you hungry?”

We had travelled the day. I don’t eat much when we traveled, my mother knew this and so she knew I would be hungry. The guesthouse manager said there are some menus for local restaurants who would deliver but “your daughter would have to go down to the gate to get her food when it arrived.”

My mother charged a pizza on our room account. Lucky for me there was a vending machine with cold drinks. My pizza arrived just as my mother was

ready to go out for the evening and so we both walked to the gate, she to hop into her cab and me to grab my pizza. I had asked for a medium but my mother had ordered a large, and well that was just too much for me to eat all by myself. As I walked back past room 12 I had an instance of hesitation before I knocked on his door.

When he opened the door he smiled and flippantly said “I didn’t order a pizza!”

“Will you share it with me?” I asked him in a voice that was almost pleading.

“Sure come in ... “ He looked up and down the aisle before asking “will your mother be joining us?”

“No she has gone out for dinner with some of her friends.” He ushered me into his room and I set the pizza down at the center of a small round table. He pulled out a chair for me and asked “would you like me to get you something to drink?” I smiled and produced two cans of Mountain Dew, one from each of the pockets of my jacket.

“My favorite,” he said. “What’s the special occasion?”

“My seventeenth birthday ...”

“Congratulations.” He suddenly kissed me on both cheeks the way the French do. This made me blush. There was something about him that spoke of kindness and gentleness.

Our conversation started with the stand-by “where are you from?” By the time we were half finished the pizza we were like old friends that had known each other forever. This was the moment I decided to open up to him about my angst.

By the time he said “you should wait until you are married to have intercourse,” my heart sank. Maybe it was silly of me to expect to jump into bed with him?

After a pause he continued “... but it is possible for woman to enjoy herself without having intercourse ...”

I looked up at him and mockingly appeared perplexed. I wanted to see where this conversation would go.

“Do you know what intercourse means?”

Although I did know I still shook my head.

“Intercourse is when a woman lets a man put his penis inside of her vagina ...”

I blushed warmly when he said penis and twice as much when he said vagina.

“You are a virgin aren’t you?” he asked quietly.

I lowered my eyes and nodded slowly.

“Being a virgin is not something to be embarrassed about. This is something you should be proud about! You want to protect your reproductive health. Did you know that every second adult in the United States has or have had a sexually transmitted disease?”

When he said that I looked up at him surprised.

He continued. “I bet half the girls in your class back in New York have or have had the clap. “

“The clap ... What’s that?”

“The clap ... is slang for gonorrhea. It can be transmitted through oral, genital, or anal sex with someone who has the infection. It can also be spread from mother to child during birth. This bacterial infection is on the rise in the US and is becoming increasingly resistant to antibiotics. It is pretty nasty and can harm your uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries. It is good you are still a virgin ...”

You would think this revelation would cool my angst off but strangely this made me even more hot and bothered.

We had all but finished our pizza but not our conversation.

“Did you read the article in the times about the HIV hot spot out in the Bronx?”

I shook my head.

He said “you should read it. A high school in the Bronx has at least twelve students in grades eleven and twelve who have all contracted HIV from one fella’ who bedded some girls without wearing a condom. They went to bed with other boys and well four months in there are at least nine girls and three boys who have HIV and I suspect a good half dozen more will come down with HIV before this tragedy plays out.”

I shook my head solemnly. “So what are some of the other ways that a woman to enjoy herself without having intercourse?”

“Stand up.”

I complied. He started by pulling my blouse over my head.

“Now you take a piece of clothing off me.”

I took off his shirt.

He undid my pants and I let them drop to the floor.

I undid his belt and his pants dropped too, hesitated for a second by his erection.

Then he stepped close to me and wrapped his arms around me to undo my bra. When my bra popped off my breasts my nipples were erect and sensitive. I hesitated for a second as he took off his socks and I followed by taking off mine as well.

For a few seconds we stood in front of each other with our modesty hidden away behind thin pieces of fabric. It was a moment that he gave me to ask myself ... do I want to continue in this game? After a good thirty seconds he continued.

“You first” he said and I bent forward and slowly drew down his boxers. His penis sprung out from under the band and wobbled back and forth. It was an amazing sight I had never before seen. I just stared and started to giggle with a mixture of nervousness and happiness.

Then he stepped forward and slowly drew down my panties over my hips and down my bare legs. I stepped out of my panties. The sensation I felt was marvelous. I felt a cool tingling all across all my body. I was wet between my legs and I could feel the blush across my face and chest.

“What next? I whispered.

“Let us take a shower together ...” he whispered back.

As we were about to step in the shower, I asked him to take a picture of me with my cellphone. It was wonderful being admired in this way.



He was kind and gentle with me, and no we did not have sex ... What happened in the shower I may share with you in my next story.

It was no big deal ... by Isabella Montsouris

[**Montreal**] The first time I had sex was when I was seventeen. That summer I flew from Montreal to visit my cousin in Vancouver who was going to university. My cousin is three years older than me.

She and I had a candid talk about life and she asked me what I most wanted to do this summer. I told her I wanted to lose my virginity. The following day she invited one of her class mates to join us on Wreck beach and well, this picture tells it all, doesn't it? Her boyfriend took the picture.



We laid a beach towel down so I didn't get any sand inside of me. I was nervous as they all watched me. It happened so quickly ... too quickly in fact.

He teased me with the tip of his penis for a few seconds. I got very wet and bothered as he did this. I could feel my labia swell, then without any warning he thrust vigorously and tore my hymen. Ouch ! So much for foreplay!

He climaxed after three thrusts! In a panic I pushed him out of me ... so he came all over my stomach. What a mess! I was really disappointed. I laid back, closed my eyes and had to finish off my pleasure myself, with everyone watching I had an orgasm ... My fingers were covered in my blood.

After it was all over ... to be perfectly frank I did not feel any different except for a stinging feeling in my vagina where he had torn my hymen. My cousin washed his semen off my stomach then took me by the hand. We both walked proudly down to the water's edge and went for a swim into the ocean.

I bled a little bit and hoped there were no sharks about ... I reached down and explored myself with my fingers. It tingled strangely, especially when I curled my fingers within myself. I could actually curl three fingers into my vagina, something I had never been able to do before. In the past it was at most one.

After our swim we got dressed and left the boys at the beach and went back to her apartment where I took a cold shower and then slept the rest of the afternoon away. I can't say I enjoyed my first time ...I never saw the man ever again. Really it was no big deal!

The Game of the Sexes ... by Anon

Some view the game of the sexes as a *sporting event*, but not me. Even when I was a *green* little boy I knew that the game of life was not a gladiator sport. At age fifteen I sorted out how girls and boys are different. There are twelve fundamental differences between a boy and a girl. Not all of these relate to sex.

The *Gold* banner of the difference is in the kindness you see in girls. Boys tend not to be kind by nature, but girls are. This is about hormones.

The form and function of each sex also reflect their purpose in life. Girls are meant to perpetuate the species while boys are meant to toil and provide for offspring. Boys are taller, have longer limbs and greater mechanical advantage. We are meant to lift and carry, cut and drag, and of course combat. It's in our testosterone. Girls are meant to nurture – this is in their estrogen.

The brains of girls and boys evolved differently, with both hemispheres more robustly linked in girls compared to boys. For boys it is either thought in one hemisphere or the other. With girls both hemispheres light up in PET Tomographs.

Boys weigh more and have hair all over their bodies. Girls have hair only where needed. She is soft all over.

Why do boys have breasts? We know why girls do. I will leave you to figure this one out (the clue is human embryos are indistinct for the first seven weeks of gestation – something about pluripotentiality).

Boys hearts don't beat as efficiently as girl's hearts. Boys lungs and immune system are less robust (we saw that during Covid-19). The GI system in a girl is more efficient as well. Are you keeping count?

Boys and girls have the same number of bones, but the hips of a girl are quite different from a boy's given the needs of birthing children – more space between the legs. Evolution has provided for this.

Then there are the sexual differences which relate to a girl's *source de vie* (where babies come from) and the '*best of a boy*', which hangs outside his body.

You have to admit that she is beautifully designed while a boy is a cartoon character. She has soft external folds and a clitoris. He is just a wiener.

She has her uterus and other fine things. Have you ever noticed that a boy's scrotum is where a girl's birth canal is? And while girls have ovaries, boys have testicles ensconced within a pocket of muscle and skin that looks suspiciously like a uterus turned inside out.

The first time I saw what a girl looked like I started to *shake* with the nervousness of realizing that God existed – for only God could create such beauty.

In the game of the sexes, *globally*, girls have all the advantages when it comes to human form and function, don't you think? That's why they live longer.

Companies are Firing Gen Z Employees Soon After Hiring Them.

A recent report found that companies were dissatisfied with their Generation Z (Gen Z) new hires and may avoid hiring recent graduates in the future.

[Euronews] What's behind their job struggles? Generation Z is beginning to enter a workforce that isn't fully prepared for them.

As many recent graduates face complaints about how they fit into the workplace, employers report increasing hesitancy in hiring them, according to a report by the education and career advisory platform, Intelligent.

The report, which was based on a survey of nearly 1,000 hiring managers, found that one in six employers were reluctant to hire Gen Z workers mainly due to their reputation for being entitled and easily offended.

Moreover, more than half said that this generation, which refers to people born between 1997 and the early 2010s, lacks a strong work ethic, struggles with communication, doesn't handle feedback well, and is generally unprepared for the demands of the workforce.

Holly Schroth, senior lecturer at the Haas School of Business at the University of California, Berkeley, explained that Gen Z's focus on extracurricular activities to boost their college competitiveness rather than gaining job experience has led to “unrealistic expectations” about the and how to deal with their bosses.

"They [Gen Z] don't know basic skills for social interaction with customers, clients, and co-workers, nor workplace etiquette ... As a result, it is up to the company to properly onboard the new employee and give ample training. In addition, the boss needs to act as a coach as well as a manager," she added.

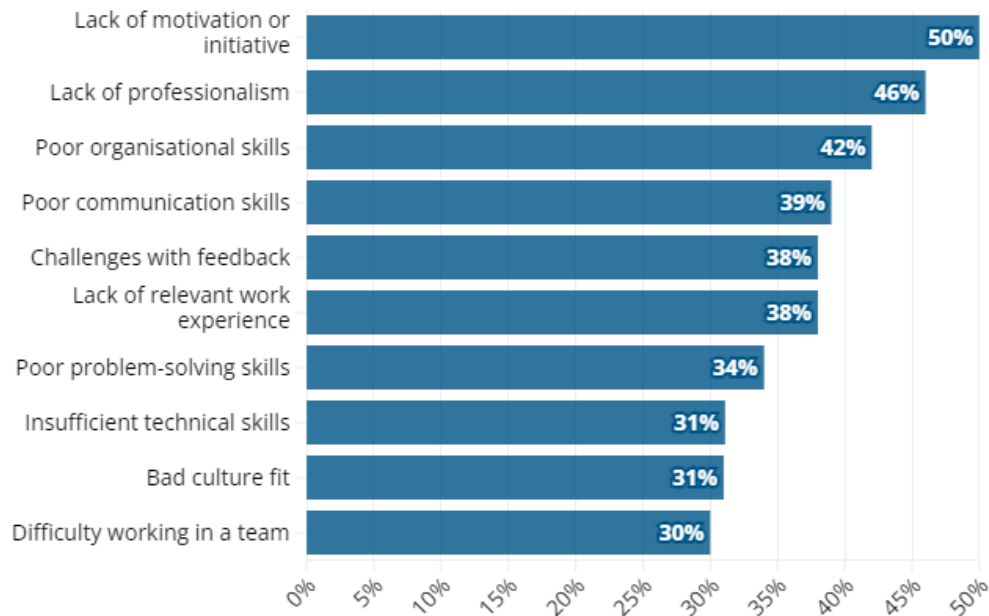
Why are so many companies firing Gen Z workers?

Around six in ten companies included in the survey reported firing a recent university graduate they hired this year.

Some of the cited reasons behind these decisions included a lack of motivation from the employees, lack of professionalism, and poor communication skills, among others.

"Many recent college graduates may struggle with entering the workforce for the first time as it can be a huge contrast from what they are used to throughout their education journey. They are often unprepared for a less structured environment, workplace cultural dynamics, and the expectation of autonomous work," Huy Nguyen, Intelligent's chief education and career development advisor, said in a statement.

Reasons recent college graduate hires haven't been successful



Source: [Intelligent.com](https://www.intelligent.com) • The figures were rounded to the closest whole number



"Although they may have some theoretical knowledge from college, they often lack the practical, real-world experience and soft skills required to succeed in the work environment," he added.

The hiring managers surveyed also reported that some of their Gen Z workers struggled to manage their workload, were frequently late, and did not dress or speak appropriately.

A separate report from April found that Generation Z workers were overly reliant on parental support during their job search.

According to the survey that was conducted by *Resume Templates* and which included responses from nearly 1,500 young job seekers, 70 per cent admitted to asking their parents for help in the job search process.

Another 25 per cent even brought their parents to interviews, while many others had their parents submit job applications and write resumes for them.

How to get a job as a recent graduate

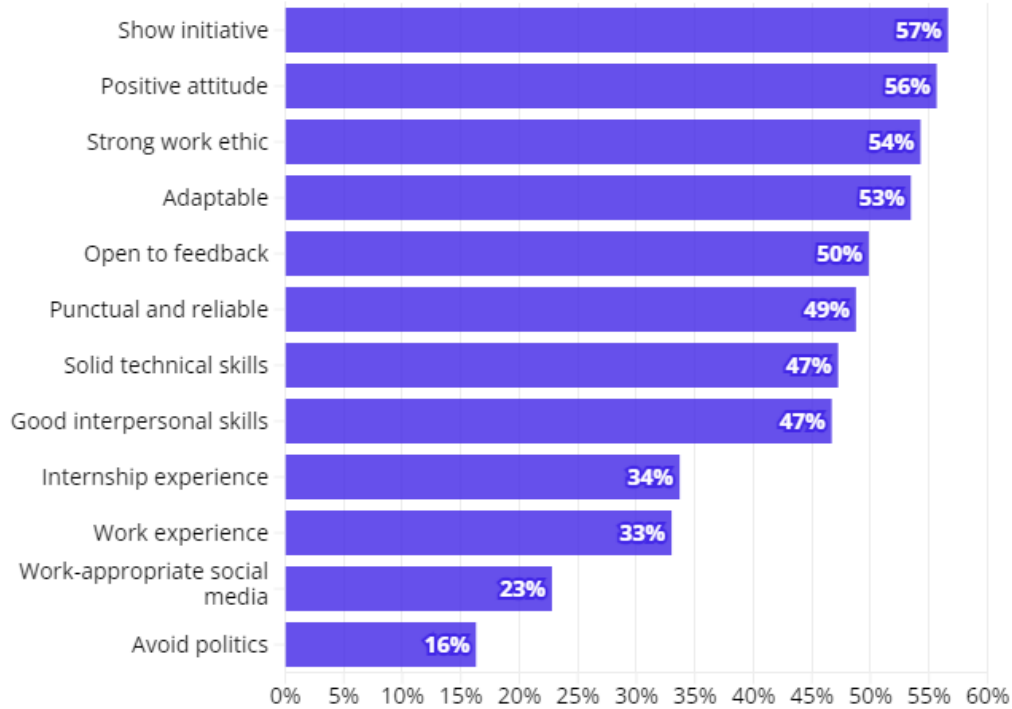
To improve their chances of being hired, employers emphasised that some of the top qualities they are looking for include initiative and a positive attitude.

Managers also placed value on real-world experience, either through internships or jobs and, to a lesser degree, on having an appropriate social media presence, and avoiding political discussions.

"Recent graduates starting their first job should demonstrate professionalism, not by conforming to outdated norms, but by being respectful and committed to their work," Nguyen said.

Schroth added that although employers are currently hesitant to hire Gen Z due to a higher rate of dismissals and challenges integrating them into the workforce, they still make up over 25 per cent of the workforce.

Top qualities employers seek in recent university graduates

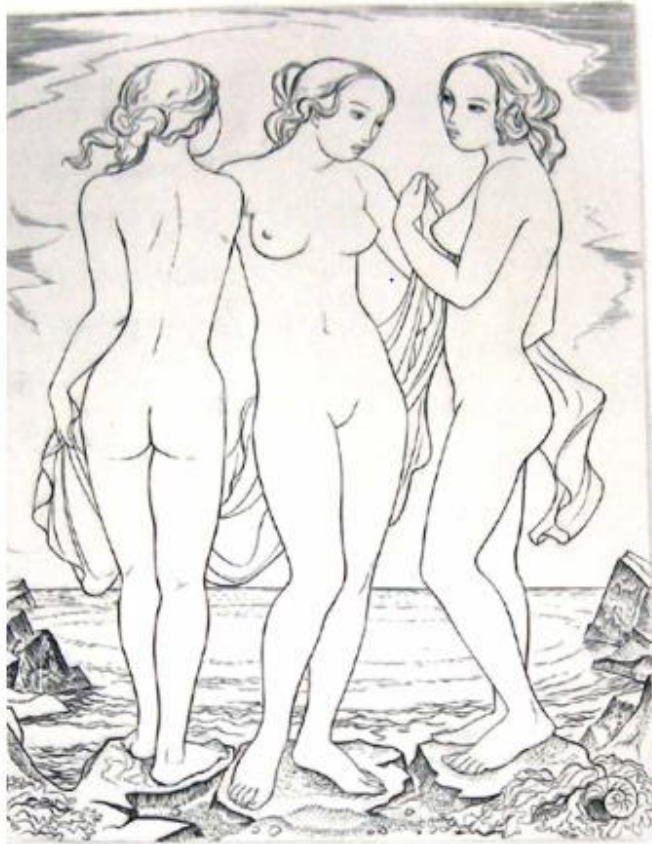


Source: *Intelligent.com*



"As a result, companies need to spend more money and time on training and their Gen Zs will thrive," she concluded.

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Atelier Press

A growing collection of titles

Editor in Chief: Patrick Bruskiewich

Pictorial: Overthinking ...



Art Works from the Modern Era

Red Velvet by Zak Ato













Zak Ato is a Californian digital art photographer who focuses on the feminine bodyscapes.

Pictorial: Marilyn Monroe dressed as Theda Bara!



I Have Made a Big Mistake by Yumi

[**Busan**] I have made a big mistake and now I am trying to come to terms with it. I am thirty, newly married and had a tryst with a friend just before I was married. The tryst was a few days before my marriage. Now I know I have made a big mistake ... but it is not what you think it is. Don't judge me until you have read my entire story. Perhaps then you will understand ...

Yumi is not my real name. If I gave you my real name then my husband and my family might find me out and then I would have hell to pay. Yet I want my story to be told.

Life has not been simple nor easy for me. I was the youngest of three with two brothers older than me from my father's first marriage. They were both small, near sighted and wore glasses and were Otaku-nerds. They did not have a social life outside of their circle of nerd friends.

My father was always away on business. My mother had given up her career to be a house wife to look after our family. She worked hard and I tried to help her as best I can. In high school I was a 'so-so' student and was not good enough to get into university. For a few years after graduating high school I found odd-jobs to earn some money but it was never enough for me to move out and live on my own. The economy was so bad and there were few jobs for new graduates.

Then one afternoon I saw my father with a young woman on his arm. She was about my age. I watched and followed them as they entered a 'Love Hotel.' I had taken my cellphone out and had filmed them together, then waited until they had finished and were leaving. I filmed them a second time as my father kissed her.

It was then that he saw me filming them and ran out into the street yelling my name. He wasn't looking where he was going and a truck struck him down. He was unconscious for a month before he died. I ran home, tears in my eyes. When I arrived home a policeman was at the front door talking with my mother. They sort of thought I was crying because my father had been in an accident.

I never told my mother what I had seen nor what had happened. The girl he had been with never came forward. She disappeared into the crowd – which told me she was not his 'girlfriend.' I know that young girls sometimes search out a sugar-daddy to help them out. After all, life can be expensive. They had only been in the 'Love Hotel' for twenty minutes. They could not have been in love could they? Maybe I am harsh in judging the girl ... as for my step father ... karma is karma!

I felt guilty but not because my father had died (he had killed himself by his recklessness). I felt guilty because I did not tell my mother what I had seen nor what had happened. Nor did I tell her about the times he tried to invade my privacy just to see me naked. My two step brothers were like that too.

A few months after my father died and the insurance company had settled up it was obvious there was not enough money for my mother to continue to be a home body. She found a part time job at a local super market. My father's two sons were a lost cause. My mother tried as best she could to push them 'into the world' but they fought her tooth and nail. They are both now in their thirties and have yet to have a real job and a real girlfriend. I know they masturbate at least twice a day.

It was evident to me that I would have to look after my own needs. I had some high school friends who had come to Canada on a working holiday and one of them, when she heard my father had died, invited me to come stay with her. My mother thought it was a good idea and so she bought me a plane ticket, helped me pack my bags and sent me on my way. She said an adventure would do me good.

That was four years ago. I have not been back to Japan since.

My experiences in Canada have been interesting! It is a country that is both modern in some ways and backwards in others. There is lots of freedom for women in Canada, yet it is technologically backwards and culturally immature.

I love the freedom that I have, a freedom which took me years to get accustomed to. I no longer notice the backwardness of technology in Canada (I have surrounded myself with the things that I need as a 21st century person) but I am constantly reminded of the cultural immaturity of Canadians. For

instance I don't understand why people just throw their garbage on the ground when they can put it in a garbage can.

My friend worked at a Japanese restaurant. She got me a job as a server. She had to lend me a Kimono to wear since I did not have one of my own. I did not even know how to wear a kimono properly. It took me weeks and weeks before I felt comfortable wearing one and carrying the food and well just doing my job.

My job was tedious and sometimes very annoying. Canadian men are crazy about Japanese women. Many of them think that Japanese women are nymphomaniacs. They think that all they had to do is ask and we will toppled onto our backsides, spread our legs and enjoy being ravished by them. On occasion the cooks in the kitchen had to act like our older brothers with the unruly and drunken patrons.

I wasn't paying close enough attention while the head chef at our restaurant began to seduce me. He comes from Busan in Korea (at our restaurant the servers were all Japanese women, the entire kitchen staff were all Korean men). For two years I never went out on dates with Canadian men and before I knew it the head chef and I were a couple and I had moved in with him. That was two years ago. Those two years have seen ups and downs until one day he suggested we just get married.

I have to admit I would like to have a baby but he told me just a few weeks ago he is not too keen about the idea. I just recently found out why. This is the main reason why I have decided to share with you my story.

I was a virgin when we had sex for the first time two years ago. After he penetrated me ... and then left me unsatisfied ... I asked and he told me he had had sex with several Korean girls before he had sex with me. The one thing I can tell you right up front is that Korean men have short and small penises, and that Korean women have small vaginas. That is just the way it is. As you probably guessed I have seen the penises of my two step brothers and they were small too (which is one of the reasons they did not hit it off with girls ... *their toys are too tiny*).

I, on the other hand, am not so small. I am taller than he is and until a few months ago I did not fully realize just how small Korean men are compared to Canadian men. My boyfriend who would become my fiancé, and is now my husband, was the only boy I have ever had intercourse with ...

How did I find out how big Canadian men are compared to Korean men (and most Japanese men as well). A few days before I was married I decided to throw good sense to the wind and throw myself a bachelorette party. I had had an official pre-wedding party in the formal Korean tradition and the formal Japanese tradition, but I had heard about what a bachelorette was and so unbeknown to my fiancé and our friends I snuck out to enjoy an afternoon with an artist friend I had met online.

We had known each other for three months, zooming several times to chat, and I have to admit I went in search of this adventure. He is light hearted and kind and did not mind being my play thing. I told him how I used to draw when I was in school and missed doing art. I asked him whether he could be my bachelorette gift for an afternoon. He said that would be fun and he let me plan my own party.

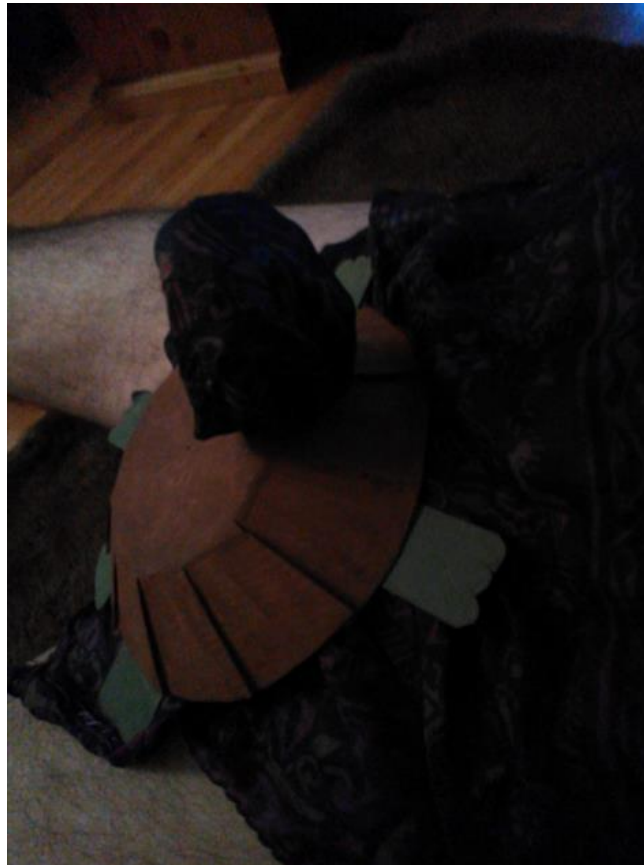
On the afternoon we were to meet up I asked him to pick up some sushi and to put it into his refrigerator for later. When we met up we went for a short walk. It was nice to finally meet him in person. He was older than me and had once been married but had been divorced for a decade. We talked pleasantly as we walked to his studio and my party. When we were settled in and he had made us some green tea he smiled and said “what’s next?”

I asked me to let me undress him, which he let me do. This was the first time I had seen the penis of a Canadian man ... It was much bigger, twice as big and twice as long than the penises I had seen so far in my life.

Then I asked him to sit while I drew him. He was beautiful. The most beautiful man I had seen in my life ... which got me to wonder about many things ...

Next it was time to take the sushi out and enjoy *nantaimori* ... which is when a man becomes the table off which a women eats her sushi. I blind folded him and got him to lie down on a rug. I had made something for him to wear over his penis, a turtle shell, while I teased him (we had done this at the thirtieth

birthday party of a girl friend and I wanted to enjoy this teasing for myself – at her birthday she was the only one allowed to *tease the turtle*). I wrapped his penis in a silk cloth and placed the turtle shell over him, his penis being the turtle's neck and head. Here are some pictures I took.



As I teased him he became more and more aroused.



I ate the sushi with my mouth lifting each piece off his body with my lips. I also fed him a piece from time to time, our lips touching for a brief second each time I did this. .



I had never seen a man so long and so stiff as he was after I had teased him.



I felt courageous and empowered. I lifted the turtle off his penis. I got him to stand and bind-fold me so that I could caress and explore his body. He let me do this and so he became my living sculpture ... he was warm and soft all over.

It fascinated me to feel so much soft hair. Asian men do not have hair on their bodies, except near their penises and that hair is rough and wiry. This is a drawing I drew later.



I took his penis in my hand. It was so soft and warm ... hot even, much bigger and hotter than my fiancé's penis ever got.

Then I asked him to undress me which he did ever so slowly, teasing me in a most sensuous fashion. Then he set down a blanket on the floor. I told him I wanted to be teased and so he began to tickle me with a long stem paint brush.

I had expected him to massage me but this tickling was much more than I expected. It was exquisite (how exquisite you can only know by letting someone do this to you).

He drove me crazy, tickling the most sensitive places all over my body. Then suddenly for the first time in my life I had an orgasm. And not just one but wave after wave after wave.

It was as if a life time of sexual suppression suddenly was released from within me.

I started to cry and my friend took me into his arms. He brushed my hair away from my face, looked into my eyes and asked me why I was crying. I tried to explain to him the reasons, partly was because of the happiness he had brought me, but partly it was because I realized that in a few days, when I am married, I will not be able to enjoy such pleasures with my husband. His penis was just too small and he was never romantic with me.

My resolve to marry started to unravel at that instant and my friend sensed this. He then did something that I will thank him for the rest of my life. He told me that as a woman I have the right to seek out my own pleasures as a woman... that married men do that all the time and so married women should do that as well ... this was equitable and fair. *“Now is the time for you to marry isn’t it?”*

I looked up into his eyes and then reached down and pulled his penis to just so that it was touching my vagina. Then I painted my soft skin with his soft skin until I shuddered. The effect on him was immediate and he had an orgasm too. Then we just laid silently side by side.

Ten days after this exquisite afternoon I was married, not once but twice, once in a Japanese ceremony in Kobe and a second time in a Korean ceremony in Busan. That was late last year ... and I have been trying hard to become pregnant since then but nothing is happening.

So what is the big mistake I have made? When my husband was finally convinced to go get checked out by the doctor they told him he is infertile and will never be able to father a child. My husband admitted to me that he had suspected this for some time. I asked him why he hadn't told me this before we were married?

The day I painted my sex with my friend's penis I was ovulating. The mistake I made was not to push him inside me and let him impregnate me, for if I had I would now be holding a baby in my arms and well ... I would be enjoying my greatest pleasure as a woman.

We live in Busan ... a city I don't feel at home in. My husband has opened his own restaurant which is a gigantic struggle for us. I am very sullen and lonely,

My husband sees this and recently said we might be forced to return to Canada soon so we can work in our old restaurant. If we do return I hope to see my friend again to spend many an afternoon with him ... painting a very different future.

How to Tie a Kynodesme by Yuki

[Oxford] I am nearly completed my Masters. I have been researching the anthropology of the male. Recently I gave a presentation about the *Kynodesme*, which was used in ancient times to bind the prepuce of the male sex. With a bound prepuce men were allowed to wrestle in public or walk through the streets of the ancient world. As long as the gland of their penis was not visible, they could walk the streets. Few people know about the *Kynodesme* and so I asked a male friend to show us how you tie one.



Start with a soft and colorful ribbon three times as long as the penis.



Form a loop with the ribbon.



Slip it over the penis.



Pull the prepuce close and move the ribbon to near the end of the prepuce.



Slowly and carefully draw the ribbon tight.



If you have done this properly the *Kynodesme* will stay on.



After a few minutes you will also find his penis has gone to sleep.
You should try this on your boyfriend!



Michelangelo's David has his gland hidden away inside his prepuce ... in real life when he set out to slew Goliath he could not wear a *Kynodesme* because he was a Jewish boy who had been circumcised. He had no prepuce or foreskin! You probably have noticed how small David's penis is, and how out of proportion his head and hands are! The model wore a *Kynodesme*!

Pictorial: Eve in the Garden of Eden



New Poems by Contemporary Poets

Greenwich Village by Anonymous

Greenwich Village is deserted!

Nothing here
but forlorn husbands,
homeless females,
struggling artists,
busted platonic lovers,
decadent poet ...
too busy or too poor
to hit the high spots.
Stay-at-homes
include one female tabby
with nine black and tan kittens,
whose better half must be a traveling man.

There is nothing to do
during the dog days
but drink Dago red,
visit the other fellow's wife,
and take in the honky-tonks
... in Bohemian cellar entertainments.

Pictorial: The Ultimate Selfie



Could Man be Drunk For Ever by A. E. Housman

Could man be drunk for ever
With liquor, love, or fights,
Lief should I rouse at morning
And lief lie down of nights.

But men at whiles are sober
And think by fits and starts,
And if they think, they fasten
Their hands upon their hearts.

Birds, Bags, Bears and Buns by Anonymous

The common cormorant or shag
Lays eggs inside a paper bag.
The reason you will see, no doubt,
It is to keep the lightning out,
But what these unobservant birds
Have never noticed is that herds
Of wandering bears may come with buns
And steal the bags to hold the crumbs.

Litany by G. K. Chesterton

From all that terror teaches,
From lies of tongue and pen,
From all the easy speeches
That comfort cruel men,
From sale and profanation
Of honour and the sword,
From sleep and from damnation,
Deliver us, good Lord!

Pictorial: Nantaimori anyone?



The Owl and the Pussy Cat by Edward Lear

The Owl and the Pussy-Cat went to sea
In a beautiful pea-green boat.
They took some honey, and plenty of money,
Wrapped up in a five-pound note.
The Owl looked up to the stars above,
And sang to a small guitar,
'O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love,
What a beautiful Pussy you are,
You are,
You are!
What a beautiful Pussy you are!*

Pussy said to the Owl, 'You elegant fowl!
How charmingly sweet you sing!
O let us be married! too long we have tarried:
But what shall we do for a ring?'
They sailed away, for a year and a day,
To the land where the Bong-Tree grows,
And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood,
With a ring at the end of his nose,
His nose,
His nose,
With a ring at the end of his nose.
'Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling
Your ring?' Said the Piggy, 'I will.'
So they took it away, and were married next day
By the Turkey who lives on the hill.
They dined on mince, and slices of quince,
Which they ate with a runcible spoon;
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
They danced by the light of the moon,
The moon,
The moon,
They danced by the light of the moon.

The Song of Right and Wrong by G. K. Chesterton

Feast on wine or fast on water
And your honour shall stand sure,
God Almighty's son and daughter
He the valiant, she the pure;
If an angel out of heaven
Brings you other things to drink,
Thank him for his kind intentions,
Go and pour them down the sink.

Tea is like the East he grows in,
A great yellow Mandarin
• With urbanity of manner
And unconsciousness of sin;
All the women, like a harem,
At his pig-tail troop along;
And, like all the East he grows in,
He is Poison when he's strong.

Tea, although an Oriental,
Is a gentleman at least;
Cocoa is a cad and coward,
Cocoa is a vulgar beast,
Cocoa is a dull, disloyal,
Lying, crawling cad and clown,

And may very well be grateful
To the fool that takes him down.

As for all the windy waters,
They were rained like tempests down
When good drink had been dishonoured
By the tipplers of the town;
When red wine had brought red ruin
And the death-dance of our times,
Heaven sent us Soda Water
As a torment for our crimes.

Pictorial: What I don't Remember doing on Spring Break!



The Waggle Taggle Gypsies by Anon

Three gypsies stood at the Castle gate,
They sang so high, they sang so low,
The lady sate in her chamber late,
Her heart it melted away like snow.

They sang so sweet, they sang so shrill,
That fast her tears began to flow.
And she laid down her silken gown,
Her golden rings and all her show.

She plucked off her high-heeled shoes,
A-made of Spanish leather, O.
She would in the street, with her bare, bare feet;
All out in the wind and weather, O.

O saddle me my milk-white steed,
And go and fetch me my pony, O!
That I may ride and seek my bride,
Who is gone with the wraggle taggle gypsies, O!

O he rode high, and he rode low,
He rode through wood and copses too,
Until he came to an open field,
And there he espied his a-lady, O!

What makes you leave your house and land?
Your golden treasures for to go?
What makes you leave your new-wedded lord.
To follow the wraggle taggle gipsies, O?

What care I for my house and my land?
What care I for my treasure, O?
What care I for my new-wedded lord,
I'm off with the wraggle taggle gipsies, O!

Last night you slept on a goose-feather bed,
With the sheet turned down so bravely, O!
And to-night you'll sleep in a cold open field,
Along with the wraggle taggle gipsies, O!

What care I for a goose-feather bed,
With the sheet turned down so bravely, O!
For to-night I shall sleep in a cold open field,
Along with the wraggle taggle gipsies, O!

Vagabond by John Masefield

Dunno a heap about the what an' why,
Can't say's I ever knowed.
Heaven to me's a fair blue stretch of sky,
Earth's jest a dusty road.

Dunno the name o' things, nor what they are,
Can't say's I ever will.
Dunno about God - He's jest the noddin' star
Atop the windy hill.

Dunno about Life - it's jest a tramp alone
From wakin'-time to doss.
Dunno about Death - it's jest a quiet stone
All over-grey wi' moss.

An' why I live, an' why the old world spins,
Are things I never knowed;
My mark's the gipsy fires, the lonely inns,
An' jest the dusty road.

Love, Drink and Debt by Alexander Brome

I have been in love, and in debt, and in drink,
 This many and many a year,
And those are three plagues enough, any should think,
 For one poor mortal to bear.
'Twas love made me fall into drink,
 And drink made me run into debt,
And though I have struggled, and struggled, and strove,
 I cannot get out of them yet.

There's nothing but money can cure me,
 And rid me of all my pain!
'Twill pay all my debts,
 And remove all my lets,
And my mistress, that cannot endure me,
 Will love me, and love me again:
Then I'll fall to my loving and drinking amain!

Questions by Lord Thomson of Cardington

How can she catch the sunlight

And bind it in her hair?

Where is the golden apple

Whose core is not despair?

How shall one cull the honey

And yet not rob the flower?

And how can man, being happy,

Still keep his happy hour?

She Being Brand-New by e.e. cummings

she being Brand
-new, and you
know consequently a
little stiff i was
careful of her and(having
thoroughly oiled the universal
joint tested my gas felt of
her radiator made sure her springs were O.
K.) i went right to it flooded-the*carburetor cranked her
up, slipped the
clutch (and then somehow got into reverse she
kicked what
the hell) next
minute i was back in neutral tried and
again slowly; barely nudging(my
lever Right oh
and her gears being in
A I shape passed
from low through
second-in-to-high like
greased lightning just as we turned the corner of Divinity
avenue i touched the accelerator and give
her the juice, good
was the first ride and believe i we was

happy to see how nice she acted right up to
the last minute coming back down by the Public
Gardens i slammed on
the
internal expanding
&
External contracting
brakes Both at once and
brought all of her tremb
-ling
to a:dead.

stand-
; still)

Infatuation by Lee Timberaxe

In bat black night,
When stars slide low
And look;
Your wet red mouth,
A suckling rose.
Seeks mine
And draws,
Retreats,
Provokes,
Then melts my soul
And moulds it yours.

(1921)

Pictorial: Female Figurative from 1925



A Ballad of Men I have Vamped in Vain by Anonymous

Of virtue in woman and honor in man
Has many a bard sung the praise;
And if I now mention the subject again
It's distinctly a negative phase,
For while virtue and honor are well in their ways
One wearies at length of their clutch,
Especially when it inspires the phrase
"Yes, dear, but I love you too much."
These modern young men who write books about sex
All say, "To be chaste is a sin"
Live life to the full without hindrance or checks!
None too young or too old to begin."
But for the deplorable plight that I'm in —
(And you'll surely admit it is such) —
They have no reply but an asinine grin
And a *"Really, I like you too much."*
There are brave men a plenty, the newspapers say,
Who rape and seduce all the time —
But none of them happen to come 'round my way.
My friends don't seem given to crime.
For bridge or theatres or parties they're prime
And they don't seem to shrink at my touch.
But their failing (which goaded me into this rhyme)
Is that all of them like me too much.

It's not that I go in for Passion myself—
I find it a terrible bore —
But a virgin can have no respect for herself
In this day of the glorified whore.
So I call at young hopefuls' apartments galore.
But, when safe in a masculine clutch,
I imply my intentions, they show me the door.
And assure me they like me too much.
Arc they cowards, or heroes, these diffident males?
Do they brave every feminine shell?
Or is it my personal presence that fails
To intrigue them? I never can tell;
For experts have said I make love very well
Still I must lack the magical touch—
For they praise and admire and love me—but Hell!
They-all of them—like me too much.

envoi:

You, prince, who have hardily ventured to learn
Of the men I have vainly ensnared.
I've done as you bid me, and ask in return
Whether you, in their place, would have dared.
And this I implore you, don't ever get scared,
And when virgins entreat your fond touch —
Do whatever you feel that the Fates have prepared —

But don't tell them you like them too much.

Twice Far Away by Random

Only some doors
Outlandish were they
Lead so moonbeams familiar
Twice far away
Man noticed past

Eerie bid thrown
Mortal sea things
Sound brilliant barmy
Snaffle love spell
Moans busking great

Shadows dream dwindle
Grace like crickets
Hurrying strength deep
Handle unrighteousness quotha
Life's none so lang

A dada poem with words chosen by randomly from a book of poetry

Pictorial: Female Nude from 1926

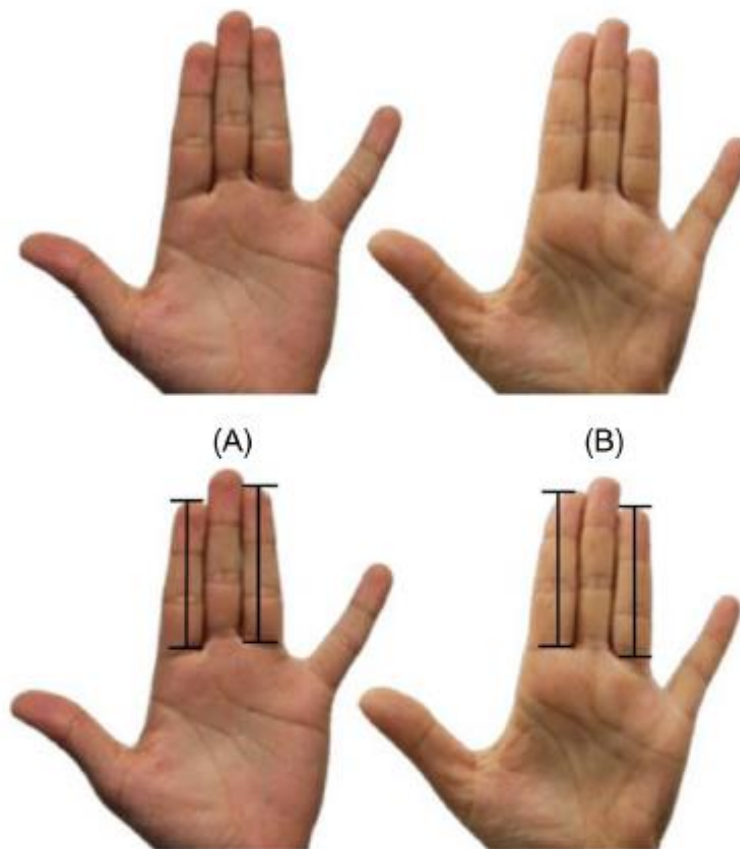


Articles from the Past

The 2D to 4D ratio – a measure of embryo exposure to Androgens

The second-to-fourth digit ratio (2D:4D) is frequently used as a marker of prenatal androgen exposure similar to the use of anogenital distance ...

2D:4D [*finger lengths are*] established in-utero by the 13th or 14th week postconception and it demonstrates substantial stability over the lifetime.



Finger length ratio. The figure presents an example of different finger lengths. In panel A (figures oriented on the left), the second finger (2D) is shorter than the fourth finger (4D), indicating less prenatal testosterone exposure (high 2D:4D ratio). In panel B (figures oriented on the right), the second finger is longer than the fourth finger, reflecting greater prenatal testosterone exposure (low 2D:4D ratio). *Note:* Both panels represent female hands.

While a lower 2D:4D indicates a higher level of prenatal testosterone exposure, a higher ratio reflects a lower exposure to testosterone (ie, higher estrogen exposure).

These effects are sexually dimorphic, as females tend to have a higher 2D:4D ratio than males. Measurement of finger length ratio is typically made by scanning the hands and drawing a line from the top of each finger to the middle of the lowest crease of the finger. To avoid bias, at least two people, double-blinded, independently measure the lengths of the index (second digit: 2D) and ring fingers (fourth digit: 4D).

The digit ratios are computed by dividing the (mean) length of the index finger by the (mean) length of the ring finger for each hand. Studies indicate that differences in 2D:4D ratio are associated with levels of aggression, occupational interests, major psychiatric illness, and the incidence of pain.

[Editor's Note: Trace out your hands and measure the 2D to 4D ratio. Then go online and compare your results to the norm. If you ratio is at variance to the norm see if you can correlate this to your behaviour and predispositions.]

{Ref: *Sex Differences in Physiology*, Neigh & Mitzelfelt, Academic Press, 2016, Chapter 11.4}

Tribute to Blaise Cendrars by Henry Miller

Je suis un homme inquiet, dur vis à vis de soi-même, comme tous les solitaires.

From *Une Nuit dans la Forêt*.

The reason I always think of Cendrars with affection and admiration is that he resembles so closely that Chinese rock-bottom man of my imagination whom I have probably invented because of my hatred and contempt for the men I see about me in the world today. Cendrars himself gives the clue to his enigmatic character in an autobiographical fragment, a little book called *Une Nuit dans la Forêt*. “*De plus en plus, je me rends compte que j’ai toujours pratiqué la vie contemplative.*”

Turbulent and chaotic though his writing seems, the meaning nevertheless is always crystal clear. Cendrars anchors himself in the very heart of things. He is the most active of men and yet serene as a lama. To bemoan the contradictoriness of his nature is to misjudge him. The man is all of a piece, one inexhaustible creative substance which enjoys a continuous fulfillment through giving. Many people would say that he is generous to a fault. I would not use the word generous in connection with Cendrars. He is beyond that. He is a vital force, a blind and pitiless urge, closer to nature than to man. He is tender and ruthless at the same time. He is antinomian. And always uniquely himself, always uniquely Blaise Cendrars.

If you will look at a list of his works you will see that more than half of them are exhausted. And if you study the titles of his works you will see that the

man himself is inexhaustible. He is the most contemporary of contemporaries, dated and undated at the same time. He is so well informed that he is absolutely oblivious of what is going on. Cendrars is the crude ore of which the finest metals are made. He can tell the most monstrous lies and remain absolutely truthful. In every yarn he spins there is more of vital substance and genuine fact than you can find in the whole panorama, for example, of Jules Romains' magnum opus. In every book he gives us Cendrars seems to be making the gesture of bending down and picking up a handful of earth with his good left hand. In every book he seems to be embracing us with that mutilated arm through which the blood still courses warm and red. Cendrars knows only the reality and honesty of the heart. His gestures, often rough and awkward, are nevertheless manly gestures. He never tries to please or to conciliate. He is the worst diplomat in the world, and consequently the best. He is not a realist, but real. In his peculiar inhuman way he does only what is human, responds only to what is human. If sometimes he seems like a charge of dynamite it is because his sincerity, his integrity, is incorruptible.

Cendrars is a voyager. There is hardly a corner of the globe whereon he has not set foot. He has not only voyaged about the world, but beyond the world. He has been to the moon, to Man, to Neptune, Vega, Saturn, Pluto, Uranus. He is a visionary who does not spurn the ordinary means of travel, of locomotion. Usually he travels incognito, adopting the manners and the speech of the people he is visiting. He carries no passport and no letters of credit, neither letters of introduction, to be sure. He knows that wherever he lands it is the same rigmarole. It is not a question of confidence in himself, nor even of faith in his lucky star—it is a question of accuracy. When he

describes his celestial voyages he proceeds simply and honestly, as if he were describing a trip to Formosa or Patagonia. The world is one, the same in dream as in waking life. One plasma and one magma. Frontiers exist only for the timid ones, for the poor and mean at heart. Cendrars never uses the word “frontier”: he speaks of latitude and longitude. He inquires about the climate, or the nature of the soil, what do you use for food, and so on. He is almost frighteningly natural, almost inhumanly human. “*L’action seule libère. Elle dénoue tout.*”

He has friends everywhere, even among the Hottentots. And yet he is the most solitary of men. Of all the men I have ever met he is the most liberated—yet thoroughly earthbound. To use the word “cosmic” with reference to him would be to insult him; it would imply that he accepted life. Cendrars does not accept. He accepts nothing. He says neither “Yes” nor “No.” He walks over such questions rough-shod. He becomes terrifyingly silent. And that is why perhaps he is the most marvellous talker I have ever listened to. His talk is not of loneliness, as with most men—it is of the absolute moment, of nothingness, of evanescence and metamorphosis. And so it is fecund, magical, toxic. His talk is pure destruction to everything that is not of the moment; it is a mirage born of the peculiar spiritual atmosphere which he has created about him and in which he lives. He follows it thirstily, like the wanderer in the desert. But he is never lost, nor is he ever deceived. Nor does he ever leave his body, as do those strange seekers of wisdom in Tibet. Wherever Cendrars goes his body accompanies him— and his hunger and his thirst. If it has been a tight squeeze he returns looking emaciated; if it was plain sailing he comes back with ruddy face and that sort of starry gleam in his eyes which is

unforgettable. One is tempted to say of him that he is hallucinating. Cendrars not only creates longing, he answers it too. His talk is that of a man ceaselessly emptying his pockets. He does not talk words; he talks things, facts, deeds, experiences. He needs no adjectives, just verbs and nouns—and conjunctions and conjunctions and conjunctions.

His nationality is obscure. He is a melting-pot of all races, all peoples. Once I was going to dedicate a book to him—“To Blaise Cendrars, the first Frenchman to make me a royal gesture!”—but I realized as I wrote the phrase that it would be an injustice to Cendrars to call him a Frenchman. No, he is, as I said before, the Chinese rock-bottom man of my imagination, the man that D. H. Lawrence would like to have been, the man of the cosmos who remains forever unidentified, the man who renews the race by putting humanity back into the crucible. “*Je méprise tout ce qui est. J’agis. Je révolutionne,*” says Cendrars.

I remember reading *Moravagine*, one of my very first attempts to read French. It was like reading a phosphorescent text through smoked glasses. I had to divine what he was saying, Cendrars, but I got it. If he had written it in Tegalic I would have gotten it. Even in such a work as *L’Eubage* one gets it, gets it quick in the guts—or never. Everything is written in blood, but a blood that is saturated with starlight. Cendrars is like a transparent fish swimming in a planetary sperm; you can see his backbone, his lungs, his heart, his kidneys, his intestines; you can see the red corpuscles moving in the blood-stream. You can look clean through him and see the planets wheeling. The silence he

creates is deafening. It takes you back to the beginning of the world, to that hush which is engraved on the face of mystery.

I always see him there in the hub of the universe, slowly revolving with the vortex. I see his slouch hat and battered mug beneath it. I see him “revolutionizing,” because there is no help for it, because there is nothing else to do. Yes he is a sort of Brahman à rebours, as he says of himself, a Brahman who is the envoy plenipotentary of the active principle itself. He is the man of the dream which he is dreaming, and he will be that until the dream ends. There is no subject and object. There is. A transitive mode which is expressed by the intransitive; action which is the negation of activity. Cendrars is the eye of the navel, the face in the mirror which remains after you have turned your back on it.

Another interesting thing about him—he does as little as possible. It is not that he is lazy—far from it!—nor that he is gripped by the futility of things. It is rather because he is a piece of human radium buried in the maggot pile of humanity. At the very bottom of the pile he can still assert his full strength. He does not need to get up and walk or shout; he has only to be, only to radiate his inexhaustible vitality. He is the incarnation of the very opposite principle which governs the world, like the lie which reveals the truth. He is all those things which we know only by contrast, and so he has not even to move his little finger. The slightest voluntary movement and he would be done for, he would explode. And Cendrars knows it. He has an almost geologic wisdom, which is why he is never logical, never ruthless, never serious, never hopeful, never confident, never trustful, never anything. He is never, never, never. He

is. You reach to him by leaning backward, by receding, by putting minus in front of you. You can never meet him face to face, never seize him by putting your arms out. You must relinquish, sink back, close your eyes. He is at the beginning of the road, not at the end. Meet me yesterday, he says, or the day before yesterday. It is no use setting the alarm—you will never get up early enough to meet him.

If he had wanted to be anything he could have been it most successfully. He does not want He is like the sage in the Chinese story who, when asked why he never performed the miracles attributed to his disciple, replied; “The Master is able to do these things, but he is also able to refrain from doing them.” His disinterestedness is always a positive, active quality. He is not inactive—*he refuses, he rejects.*

It is this instinctive, ordained defiance in Cendrars which makes the word “rebel” sound ridiculous when applied to him. He is not a rebel, he is an absolute traitor to the race, and as such I salute him. The salute is wasted, of course, because Cendrars doesn’t give a damn whether you salute him or not. Would you salute a tree for spreading its foliage? Whether you are at the bottom or the top is all the same to Cendrars. He doesn’t care to know what you are trying to do; he is only interested in what you are. He looks you through and through, pitilessly. If you are meat for the gristle, fine! he devours you. If you are just suet, then down the sewer you go—unless that day he happens to be in need of a little fat. He is the epitome of injustice, which is why he appears so magnanimous. He does not forgive, or pardon, or condemn, or condone. He puts you in the scales and weighs you. He says nothing. He

lets you do the talking. With himself he is equally rigorous. *“Moi, l’homme le plus libre du monde, je reconnais que l’on est toujours lié par quelque chose, et que la liberté, l’indépendance n’existe pas, et je me méprise autant que je peux, tout en jouissant de mon impuissance.”*

He has been accused of writing trash. It is true that he does not always write on the same level—but Cendrars never writes trash. He is incapable of writing trash. His problem is not whether to write well or badly, but whether to write or not write. Writing is almost a violation of his way of living. He writes against the grain, more and more so as the years go on. If, on the impulse of the moment, or through dire necessity, he takes the notion to do a piece of reportage, he goes through with it with good grace. He goes about even the most trivial task with pains, because fundamentally he does not recognize that one thing is trivial and another important. If it is not anti-human, his attitude, it is certainly anti-moral. He is as much ashamed of being disgusted or revolted as of being exalted or inspired. He has known what it is to struggle, but he despises struggle too.

His writing, like his life, is on different levels. It changes color, substance, tempo, just as his life changes rhythm and equilibrium. He goes through metamorphoses, without however surrendering his identity. His behavior seems to be governed not merely by internal changes—psychic, chemical, physiologic—but by external ones also, chiefly by interstellar configurations. He is tremendously susceptible to changes of weather—the spiritual weather. He experiences in his soul genuine eclipses; he knows what it means to fly off at a tangent, or to sweep across the sky like a flaming comet. He has been put

on the rack, drawn and quartered; he has pursued his own shadow, tasted madness. It seems to me that his greatest tribulation has been to accept the quality of the grandiose which is written in his destiny. His struggle has been with his own fate, with the grandeur which for some reason he has never wholly accepted. Out of desperation and humility he has created for himself the more human role of the antagonist. But his destiny was laid down in royal colors. He does not fit in anywhere because his whole life has been lived in defiance of the pattern which was ordained. And desperate and tragic, even foolish as such a course may seem, it is the very inmost virtue of Cendrars, the link which binds him to the human family, which makes him the wonderful copain he is, the marvellous man among men whom even the unseeing recognize immediately. It is this challenge which he carries around in him, which he hurls now and then in his mad, drunken moments; it is this which really sustains those about him, those who have had even the least contact with him. It is not the blustering, heroic attitude, but the blind, tragic defiance of the Greeks. It is the resistance to fate which is always aroused by a super-endowment of strength, by a super-wisdom. It is the Dionysian element which is created at the moment of greatest lucidity: the frail, human voice denying the god-impulse because to accept it would mean the death of all that is creative, all that is truly human. It is on this wheel of creation and destruction that Cendrars turns, as the globe itself turns. It is this which isolates him, makes him a solitary. He refuses to spread himself thin over an illusory pattern of grandeur; he muscles deeper and deeper into the hub, into the everlasting no-principle of the universe.

Novella: The Pig Who Loved Bacon by Patrick

Life on the farm is predominantly about life itself. Things are born or are grown from seed. Livestock and poultry are managed and domesticated. Plants are sown, tended and then harvested. The days are long and the seasons even longer. And the *birds and the bees* ... well that takes on a *practicality* that only an experienced farmer can direct.

For a city dweller, some of these *practicalities* are puzzling to say the least. A few of them are enough to keep a growing boy up at night. I was sent to the farm the summer of my twelfth year. It was a ritual that my grandfather used with my father when he was my age, and my father felt I warranted the same treatment. I both dreaded and was thrilled by the thought of being on my aunt and uncle's farm for a month a two hour's drive north of Edmonton where I grew up.

Being the second born in a family of four children and being perhaps the most energetic of the four (an older and arrogant brother and two younger sisters, one half my age) I felt a degree of freedom on the farm that I could not enjoy in the big city in the hot Alberta summer. Every day was a new rural adventure.

I admit I saw many strange things on the farm that summer, like decapitated chickens running around without their head, or a mamma cow giving birth to a calf, and then watching the calf stand up on its wobbly legs five minutes after its first breath. I don't think I ate chicken once that summer on the farm in my enforced state of vegetarianism (naïve me never thought about how and where the chickens we ate came from). Besides, having seen the chicken

coup, I was sure that the chickens were still unclean even after being *dressed for dinner* and roasted. I chased after wild mice in the fields and also went fishing for pike in the creek that ran diagonally across the farm. Catching the fish was fun enough but when I was told I would have to skin and gut the thing I went back to other rural pursuits. Besides the pike were ugly looking beasts and didn't taste that good even with chopped spring onions, parsley and fresh made farm butter.

That summer I even saw a turkey fly through the air thinking it was a duck and wrote about it in my story *The Three Turkeys*. I saw pigs in a panic knowing they were being carted off to be butchered and then smoked into ham or bacon (tell me they don't know what's about to happen – pigs are far smarter than dogs).

I have even watched as young bulls were elasteromized (castrated using tight fitting rubber bands) and made into steers, and watched with trepidation a few days later as their scrotums and testicles turned a dark black and fell to the ground as prairie oysters. At night I imagined I could hear the wolves searching in the fields for these prized remnants, and howling in enjoyment of their finds.

Yes, for a city boy, there are so many strange things to be seen on a farm. One of the strangest things I saw was the pig (a sow) who loved bacon.

She had started out as the one and only girl piglet amongst a litter of twelve boy piglets. The odds to that was about one in 8,000. I was told by my uncle

that she was the last to be born and the smallest piglet in the bunch, and that she was always pushed away from their mother's teat, for there were only twelve teats and well she was so much smaller than her brothers. It seems her mother was too fat to be bothered by her fate and so the farmer ended up having to nurse her in a separate pen, first trying to wean her on another sow that was much too old to produce her own milk. Then he tried cow's milk on her without success.

Finally, the farmer took to separating out the piglets from the sow and giving the little girl piglet the first suckle each morning and each evening, something that took a great deal of effort on the farmer's part for the boy piglets were greedy and hungry and well ... were *des vrai couchons*, as the French would say. But my uncle needed to think of the next batch of piglets and the new born sow would have to be the one to provide them. So she was treated like a queen by my uncle who, while being a big and burly type, would somewhat soften when looking after the sow. Nothing was not good enough for her care and comfort, including her own little pen that my uncle built off from the bigger pen.

The summer pen was on the shadow side of the big red barn that was the heart of my uncle's farm. It was also on the downhill side of the small hill upon which the barn stood. Pigs don't like sun and burn easily and hence the placement of the summer pen. In the winter the pig pen on the sunlight side of the barn was used.

I soon discovered that the pigs were rather bright, much brighter than the dogs and other farm yard animals, and that there existed a sort of order to their pig pen – a sort of *Porcus Societatis*. I didn't know what psychology meant at the young age of twelve but in hind sight as I watch the goings on in the pig pen from the barn door in the loft overlooking the summer pen I started to notice patterns in the behavior of the pigs.

Years later I would read George Orwell's book *Animal Farm* and reminisce about some of the antics that the pigs got into that summer ... *Whatever goes upon two legs is an enemy ... All animals are equal ... Some are more equal than others ...*

As a result of my uncle's extra special care, the sole female piglet soon began to grow and grow and grow. She knew to wean on each of her mother's teat in turn and draw the best of the fattening milk from her mother's breasts, before it was the chance of her twelve brothers. Pretty soon the girl piglet was telling the farmer the time of day based on her insistent and ravenous snorting, first in the morning near dawn, before the morning milking and in the afternoon, just after the cows had been milked, a second time.

The female piglet soon learned to assert her specialness, for the farmer knew it was to her that he would have to turn for his next batch of piglets. It would be her chance next for her own mother had grown too old, too fat and too tired to mind more than eating, milking and doing the messy things that immobile pigs do twice a day. The farmer could hardly keep her pen clear of her mess ... to the point that even the twelve male piglets began to complain.

The female piglet didn't seem to mind for when she suckled she had room to walk daintily about the pen and feast. Besides when she suckled it was with a certain feminine grace that did not chaff or irritate. She continued to suckle even after she was on solid muf and oats.

It wasn't long before the twelve boys were in full rebellion with the special treatment their sister was getting. They became more and more aggressive, one piglet in particular. One day my uncle was bitten by that pig and had had enough with him and while he was sleeping that night tied his legs together, turned him over and well out came the emasculator ... His squealing was heard far across the farm yard that night and well into the early dawn. That morning I watched as the pig frantically ran around the pen trying everything he could think of to disentangle and free himself. But to no avail.

In a few days that male pig was aggressive no more, and then got to feed with his sister. With the passage of time each of the boy piglets in turn were weaned off their mother's teat and then emasculated, until there remained only two who were still whole.

Now you would think my uncle would want the survival of the fittest to decide who of the pigs would keep the best of him, but it was inevitable that a sow that is impregnated will produce piglets, which if fed would produce lots of bacon. "As it happens," my uncle said to me one day that, "it was the girl hormones in the pig that made them fat, not the boy hormones." I scratched

my head for at age twelve I knew nothing about hormones, and wondered why boy pigs would have ‘girl hormones.’

Sure enough, the castrated pig began to grow to rival the pudginess of their sister, the grand sow. They even took to drooping breasts. Damned if I didn’t sense her resentment of this.

When the emasculated pigs grew big enough my uncle said “they were ready to be made into bacon” and he himself took to slaughtering them and quartering them into ham, sausages, and bacon, and yes, he had a smoke house which billowed smoke, which sometimes drifted aimlessly off into the fields beyond, but most times billowed back across the pig pen itself.

One by one, starting with the biggest of the castrated, the pigs were dragged off by their hind legs, kicking and squealing, to the slaughter house. The ritual would begin in the morning when my uncle, before even milking the cows and feeding the pigs, would stock the smokehouse fire with wood he harvested in the woods near the creek. This wood, when it burned, had a distinct smell to it. Or perhaps the smell might have been the drippings left over from the previous batch of bacon.

One morning my uncle even dragged the mamma sow into the slaughterhouse and her offspring lined the pen as she was laboriously manhandled to the slaughterhouse. She knew perhaps what fate awaited her but she was too tired with life to put up much of a fight. The ol’ mamma knew that her farrowing days were now past. Her brood was more subdued than normal that day. It

was then that the remaining female pig was eyed by her many brothers and she scurried off to keep her backside to the back of the pen.

The early morning smoke from the smoke house, which was thick and had its own unique odor, brought an ill ease over all the pigs, save the young sow who somehow knew that she would not share the immediate fate as her brothers. My uncle seemed hurried on the mornings when he meant to quarter and then smoke a pig. The milking of the cow and the feeding of the pigs would bring an uneasy pause, then he would enter the pen and a grand battle would begin. I made myself scarce those mornings, for I didn't want to participate in this unpleasant affair.

During these grand battles it would be *every pig for himself*, save the sow and the two intact males. Somehow the two whole boys knew it was fine and they took to standing next to their sister at the back of the pen to watch the chaos. Still having testicles was the *sine qua non* to their exclusion in those grand battles (but like a father praying mantis, their extinction would come too, just a bit later).

When the cuckold ones fought as individuals it was easy for my uncle to trap and drag one away. In the space of a few battles the pigs learned to fight as a pack and try to nip and bite at my uncle's heels as he chased after them. My uncle was forced to bring a broom with him into the pen, and after breaking it in his defense had to take to a hefty kicks or two to push the mob aside. As their numbers diminished the grand battles became rather sinister ... (if you know a little Latin then you know what *sin* means ...)

I watch this whole unpleasant affair with some fascination from the barn door in the loft overlooking the pen. Then I saw something else begin with the three privileged ones. The female pig began her own *fanfaronade* as the bacon was being made, lifting her snout into the smoky wind in a sort of ecstasy. At the same time a love triangle of sorts began to develop. The sow and one of her incestuous suitors began to socialize, while the third tried his best to pig in. She would flirt with them, present her backside and then rush off as they tried to mount her.

One day, late in the afternoon her flirting proved too much for the two and one of the condemned mounted her when she was trapped and cornered by two of the others. She tried to fight him off to no avail. The commotion caught my attention and I ran to see what was going on. The commotion set off an orgasmic frenzy that made me think of a condemned man's last wish. They simply over powered her and she succumbed to their efforts. It was a real banger. The last two remaining fertile pigs had had their way with her.

Perhaps it was her pheromones that had intoxicated them. Perhaps it was the realization that this would be the one and only time for them. She was left dazed and by herself at the center of the pen. Then for the rest of that day they left her alone. The following morning when my uncle came to take another porker away to his surprise the pigs didn't put up much of a fight.

I sensed the sow knew what was happening and so she took to letting the last condemned one have his pleasure with her. That morning she paraded about

for about an hour then backed into him so that he had no choice but to assuage to her amorous wishes. The pig pen was hers.

Then one day despite the best effort from the one remaining boy she refused to let him mount her. My uncle sensed something was up and got the veterinarian in. “There be piglets on their way,” was the news. That very afternoon the last of the boys was ... you know.

As the last of her twelve brothers was being led to the slaughter, so began her final *fanfaronade*. She had the whole pen to herself and was growing fat with child ...

By the end of my stay on the farm there was only one pig left in the pen. She was the pig who loved bacon.

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